

## Medical Assistance Administration



# Community Conversations

Welcome to another series of Community Conversations.

The Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) of the Department of Social and Health Services administers Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), publicly funded medical programs in Washington state. The Community Conversations began in early 2001 as an important source of information for MAA as it works on its strategic plan for the next six years.

Your individual voice is important because we want to hear your ideas and opinions on what the state's health-care services should look like in 2007. Here's how things look right now:

- Both federal and state laws are adding new requirements to the health information system. These changes will include new rules to protect the privacy of your medical records. They also will streamline the codes and computer systems used to process health care claims, making the system more efficient and turning more health care dollars over to health care.
- Our nation's population is aging rapidly, which means we will be much more frequent consumers of health care than we have been in the past. Consider this: The number of Boomers on retirement will more than double, jumping from 40 million to more than 80 million, over the next three decades.
- Medical science and technology is advancing at a fearsome rate, finding new cures and developing new treatments. But with progress comes a dark side. Will the expense of these new treatments force us to ration health care and let some receive it, others not?
- No less important, what of the children? Today, Medicaid provides health care for about three out of every 10 children. And Medicaid helps pay for more than two births out of every five. These trends are growing, not abating.
- Public health-care spending takes more and more of the state budget. In the 1990s, the spending for health care grew nearly 15 percent, and the cost of prescription drugs is rising that much nearly every year.

This fall's Community Conversation is a repeat session. During its first visit to this community, the program asked for your ideas. This time, you will be able to see some of

ours. The discussions that took place here have resulted in a series of planning sessions back in Olympia, and a short-term strategic plan has emerged.

Four core strategies emerged from the statewide process:

- **Simplify processes and integrate services**, i.e., Use proven technology to simplify processes for Medicaid clients and partner
- **Keep children healthy**, i.e., Focus on improving access to preventive services and services for children's health and well being through community partnerships.
- **Effectively manage resources**, i.e., Convene community and state partners to develop ways to simplify getting coverage, accessing services and retaining access to health care as circumstances change.
- **Ensure access**, i.e., Develop baselines to measure the adequacy of our provider network for both managed care and fee-for-service.

Community Conversations team members will be available at today's session to explain the planning process as well as describe upcoming changes in medical assistance. They also will be able to discuss other plans the agency is making to cope with high health-care costs in tight budget years.

The first meeting will be held on Monday, August 13, in Spokane from 10 a.m. to noon in the Providence Auditorium at Sacred Heart Medical Center, 101 West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The second meeting will be held in Colville that afternoon, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Colville Community College, 985 South Elm St.

Other meeting locations include Vancouver, August 20, ESD No. 112, 2500 NE 65<sup>th</sup>; Aberdeen-Hoquiam, August 20, Aberdeen Senior Citizens Center, 117 E. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Aberdeen. Other meetings include: Bellingham, September 10; Wenatchee, September 13; Yakima, September 14; Tri-Cities, September 14; South Seattle, September 17; North Seattle, September 18; Fife, September 19; Port Angeles, September 21; Shoreline, September 25.

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● On-site child care and light refreshments will be available at the Community Conversations. If you have special child care or facility access needs, please contact Allena Barnes at (206) 772-5070 or by e-mail at [communityconversation@yahoo.com](mailto:communityconversation@yahoo.com)

● For interpreter services or more information, contact Tamishia Garrett at (360) 725-1879 or [garretl@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:garretl@dshs.wa.gov)



# Help us plan the future!